United Nations

Press Release

Department of Public Information • News Coverage Service • New York

Prepared by Central News

DH/1473
8 September 1993

WEDNESDAY HIGHLIGHTS

+ Secretary-General, addressing DPI/NGO Conference, urges NGOs to help forge new, stronger bond of cooperation with United Nations; calls for commitment to social development with goal of redressing deprivation.

+ President Alija Izetbegovic, after briefing Security Council on situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina, says he is ready to resume peace talks in Geneva; awaits initiative from Co-Chairmen of International Conference on Former Yugoslavia.

+ Somali Chargé d'affaires, in letter to Security Council, appeals to Member States to maintain support for UNOSOM II; says criticisms of Operation are "baseless and self-defeating".

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Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali today urged non-governmental organizations to help forge a new and stronger bond of cooperation with the United Nations. Addressing the opening session of the forty-sixth Annual Conference of the Department of Public Information for Non-Governmental Organizations, he called for a commitment to "the great social development challenge", which was emerging as one of the most pressing issues as the next century approached.

The object of social development was to redress deprivation, the Secretary-General stressed. In moral terms, it reflected a shared destiny and common humanity; in practical terms, it was indispensable for lasting peace and economic progress. The challenge of United Nations-NGO cooperation was to employ collective efforts and resources to the best advantage, he said. There were two issues of particular significance for the future of that relationship: the first was the contribution that non-governmental organizations could make to setting international standards of conduct, in social development, human rights, the environment and other areas; the second was the growing relationship between the United Nations and non-governmental organizations in assisting national reconstruction after civil war and political upheaval.

(more)

For information media--not an official record

The NGO/DPI Conference, which ends on Thursday, brings together representatives of professional and business associations, trade unions, religious, youth and women's organizations and many other voluntary groups from all over the world.

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President Alija Izetbegovic of Bosnia and Herzegovina today briefed the Security Council on the situation in his country. Answering questions from the press after the informal meeting, he said that he was ready to resume the peace talks in Geneva, which were halted last Wednesday due to disagreements on the division of territory between the parties to the conflict in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Mr. Izetbegovic said that he was waiting for an initiative to restart the talks from the Co-Chairmen of the International Conference on the Former Yugoslavia, Lord Owen and Thorvald Stoltenberg. His delegation had defined its minimum requirements on 1 September and would continue to ask for those minimums, he stated.

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The Chargé d'affaires of Somalia's Permanent Mission to the United Nations, while expressing her gratitude for the efforts to restore peace in her country and her regret at the loss of peace-keepers' lives there, has appealed to Member States to continue their support for the United Nations Operation in Somalia (UNOSOM II). In a letter to the Security Council dated 7 September, Fatun Hassan expressed dismay at criticisms of UNOSOM II, and emphasized its success in drastically reducing the starvation and inter-clan warfare that cost hundreds of lives each day last year.

The violence, the letter said, had been limited to a pocket in the south of Mogadishu, people had been enabled to start producing their own food and progress was being made in the creation of civil structures. Given those facts, criticisms of United Nations efforts in Somalia were "baseless and self-defeating". The letter stressed the importance of continuing the disarmament effort, and the need for the international community to renew its moral, material and political support for UNOSOM II. (document S/26412)

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